1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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105 The remaining 'Murias' are those of the Paralkot-Kalpatti, Bandadesh, Kirangal, Kalpatti, Surebahi, Bhomra, Antagarh and Amabera *parganas* and the larger part of the Kolar *pargana* of Antagarh tahsil, and of all Kondagaon tahsil except the Mardapal *pargana* and that portion between Kondagaon and the Jagdalpur border already mentioned as peopled by Koitor of the Jagdalpur Muria type. All these Murias have traditions of migration into Bastar from the north, from the ancient kingdom of Dhamda, on the downfall of which their god Bhera Pen (Hinduized, Budha Deo) led them in safety from the modern Raipur district into Bastar; the latter story is told in Kondagaon tahsil, but I have not heard it in Antagarh, though Antagarh certainly knows Bhera Pen, the ordinary Great God[1] of the Gonds throughout the British districts of the Central Provinces. In the Amabera *pargana* alone in Bastar is recorded the knowledge of the great Lingo epic of the Gond race, from the Bastar version of which certain extracts were printed by Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, pp. 49, 61-2). It is likely that north Kondagaon, Amabera, and north Antagarh represent separate streams of migration, and that north Antagarh contains a larger strain of the previous inhabitants, very likely the same stock as that now living in the Abujhmar hills. The Koitor inhabitants of the Kanker State that borders Antagarh and Kondagaon tahsils on the north, though called Gonds in the 1931 census report, are of exactly the same kind, intermarrying still with their Bastar Muria neighbours, and often called Murias by Hindu residents of Kanker; thus it is observed in para. 76 of the *Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer*:—

Gotul Murias, or Murias of north Kondagaon and Antagarh

> 'The aboriginal population live in much the same style and have much the same customs as the aborigines of the adjoining State of Bastar, but it is said that they are gradually coming into line with their Hindu neighbours and abandoning their old beliefs. At present, however, in the more remote villages the Gonds adhere to the worship of godlings and to their old social customs. The girls and boys have their separate sleeping barracks outside the village, and meet near them nightly to play and dance and sing.'

Nearly all of the 80,003 Gonds returned from Kanker State at the 1931 census must be of the same stock as the Murias of north Bastar.

If any particular feature is to be singled out as the distinguishing mark of this 'Muria' group of the Koitor of north Bastar and Kanker, it must be their *gotul* system for the training of the young. The *gotul* is much the same as the Bachelors' House found in

[1] Even in British districts I believe the *Bhera Pen* to be merely the 3-, 4-, 5-, 6- or 7-fold god of the clan as distinct from the 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 *Chuddur Pens* or small gods kept by each family.

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[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Awa(75)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn 177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages: but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala ●[176] Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Karka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, [197] they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar 177 to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

2 [See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-rawar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *saja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Chapter X

The Earth, the Clan-God and the Village Mother

771 In the scanty literature dealing with Bastar, few things have received briefer attention than the religion of the Marias. Russell and Hiralal try in twenty-one pages (III, 97-118) to summarize the religion, magico-religious ideas and festivals of all the Gonds of the Central Provinces; their account, therefore, necessarily must be vague about the Marias, and on Bastar generally is in many respects misinformed; there is a tendency to prefer the picturesque to the unvarnished facts, as in the accounts of the alleged human sacrifices at Dantewara and of *Doctor Deo*. I have already stated that there has never been the slightest proof that the former ever took place, and pointed out that, if they did, they were semi-State Hindu ceremonies under the aegis of the Raja and the hereditary Rajput high-priest of his tutelary goddess Danteshwari. *Doctor Deo* is represented as a principal god of 'north Bastar'; actually the Mohammedan sub-assistant surgeon 'deified' as *Doctor Deo* died of cholera on the Keskal pass as he was returning to Raipur from Bastar, and his spirit has been attached by the surrounding Murias as a peon or servant to the shrine of Bhangaram at the head of the pass, where from generations past the final scene of disease-riddance or *bohorani* ceremonies among the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur and Kondagaon tahsils and the adjacent Bastar Irredenta tracts of Jeypore had taken place; here the scapegoat from Jagdalpur is at last driven forth into the wilderness, and hundreds of litters or model *rath* chariots have been deposited in front of Bhangaram with scape-doves and the sweepings of houses visited by epidemics. *Doctor Deo's* cult is a later and very minor accretion of this ancient cult.

General: previous writers

776 618 Glasfurd in his Report correctly noted that, like the Jhoria and other surrounding Murias, the Marias of the Abujhmar hills had in several villages Log-gods which they called *pen* (plural, *penk*); but he did not realize that there was one of these *penk* for each clan. This was pointed out on page 42 of the *Gazetteer*, though the clans are spoken of there as 'tribes' or by the Hindu term *gotra*; the suggestion there made that the system of each clan in its own area worshipping its own *pen* was even then breaking down, was at least premature, considering that it is still in full force in the Antagarh

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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parts of the Abujhmar hills, if, as will be seen, it is weaker on the Kutru side and has been modified among the Bison-horn Marias.

Even among the Gonds of the British districts of the Central Provinces bordering on the Nagpur District, the special godlings such as Pharsi Pen, Matiya, Ghangra, Chawar and Palo (see Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 99) seem to be only incidental and later additions to their religion. There the clans are divided into groups or phratries according to the number of Little Gods or Chuddur Penk kept as domestic godlings in a pot inside the house of the head of the family; and for each clan there is, or was, somewhere in the Province, a Holy Circle or *Pen-kara* beneath a sacred *saja* tree, in the fork of which would be tied a grass bundle containing for the whole clan a set of godlings of the same number as the Chuddur Penk in the houses of members of the clan; this set is in reality the Big-God or Bhera Pen (a name commonly Hinduized as Bura Deo or even Mahadeo) of the clan. Just as the Chuddur Penk pot in the house not infrequently contains, besides the actual Chuddur Penk, a vermillioned shell or pebble or knot of wood representing the 'Chuddur (small) Mahadeo' or Narayan Deo or some other godling from whom the family may believe itself to have received some past help, so too the grass bundle at the Holy Circle may contain representations of Bara (big) Mahadeo, Narayan Deo, Pharsi Pen, Matiya, Ghangra, Palo, etc. But it is hopeless to expect the householder or the *Pen-gadwa* custodian of the Holy Circle to name each of the Chuddur Penk or their Bhera Pen counterparts; they have no individual names, but collectively are the clan-god. Apart from these Chuddur Penk *penates*, many houses in British districts have, in a recess in the wall or in the corner of the room, corresponding to the corner of the *lonu* where the Maria keeps the Pot of the Departed, a row of little plaster mounds representing the souls of the Departed, unless these have been taken to the *Pen-gadwa* priest at the Holy Circle and there re-united by him in the *gadwa* marriage ceremony to the clan.

Gond religion outside Bastar; the Chuddur Penk

Lucie-Smith and others record of the Marias of the Chanda District that they also have these Chuddur Penk, with phratries or groups of clans differentiated according to the number of the Penk. When, finding definitely no trace of them among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of Bastar, I suggested to Dr. Wood, the present Bishop of Nagpur, who worked as a missionary for years in Chanda, that the information about the Chanda Marias was wrong, he very kindly had further enquiries made by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, an Indian Christian missionary with an intimate knowledge of

The Chuddur Penk not known in Bastar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Chanda Gonds, who reported definitely that in the Chanda Maria villages of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi, Uddera and Kandodi the Marias had one three-god, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans. The difficulty is, of course, that the word 'Maria', as we have seen, is not a Gondi word and may cover more than one ethnic group, as in Bastar; there certainly are differences between the plains and Hill Marias of Chanda, and the point needs to be cleared by verification in definite hill villages in the Chanda portion of the Abujhmar hills. My enquiries from some of these villagers who visited my camps in Bastar along with Bastar relatives never produced any Chanda Maria who admitted belonging to a god-group or having Chuddur Penk in his house. Admittedly even in Nagpur District, Gonds are reluctant to show their Chuddur Penk, and Koitor everywhere have to be handled delicately before they will talk of the other domestic cult, that of the Departed. Nevertheless, I have known many Marias intimately, and have had them talking freely on these questions; and I have seen the contents of every pot, gourd, packet or other receptacle in many a Hill and Bison-horn Maria house: but I never found any domestic godling, and they have always denied having them, or god-groups founded on them. So likewise did adjacent Jhoria and Gotal Murias, though some of them knew of Gonds who had immigrated into Bastar from the Central Provinces with domestic godlings and god-groups. The only Bastar Gonds of whom it has ever been reported that they have domestic gods in addition to the clan-god are the 'Telugu Gonds' towards Konta (by which is probably meant the Dorla), stated on page 42 of the *Gazetteer* to have for each family a separate god represented by a few pieces of *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) wood; but the Dorla villages that I visited near Jaggergonda had no such family gods.

It may, therefore, be taken as certain that neither Hill nor Bison-horn Marias of Bastar have the cult of the Chuddur Penk, and that their clan-groups are not founded on them. If they are to be fitted into the traditional scheme of god-groups by persons who dislike exceptions to a rule apparently so universal among other Gonds, they must come in as the missing one-god group!

Much has been said in the preceding chapters, particularly the chapter on agriculture, on the cults of Bhum (the earth), the Clan-god and the Village Mother. In some sense, all three are the same, all Marias, Hill and Bison-horn, being the children of Bhum. They will tell you sometimes that the Pen clan-god and the Village Mother are also Bhum; and in some places the cairn or table-stone below the sacred *soja* tree does duty

General nature of Bastar Maria cult of Earth, Clan-god and Village Mother

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita*, *pelja*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeq-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siari* creeper or twisted

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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thongs of the outer rind of bamboos. Where *saja* trees are scarce, he may be made entirely of bamboos, but will be lodged in a hut under a *saja* tree. The junctions of the logs and the cross-pieces are adorned with bunches of peacock and jungle-cock feathers, and the ends of the logs with rupees or spirals of peacock quill or bands of brass and silver. At the first-fruits ceremonies his shed is adorned with plaited fringes of the stalks and ears of the new grains, or bunches of bean and pulse pods; and he is brought forth to have the blood of the sacrificed victims sprinkled upon him.

Halbas, Telangas and Murias have precisely similar gods; if the logs composing them are more elaborately adorned and sometimes carved. Their generic name in Bastar is Anga Deo or Pat Deo, 'Log-God'. The central log is the essential part, for the other two logs are added primarily to enable the god to be borne on the shoulders of four men when he goes forth to a festival or a witch hunt. The Jhorin log-god at Narainpur had a special nose for witches, and the late Raja Bhairam Deo, great-grandfather of the present Maharaja, installed a copy of it in the palace at Jagdalpur; for witch hunts the god used to be brought in from Narainpur while the palace copy was sent to Narainpur during his absence. I found that the palace copy was in 1927 being used generally without reference to the Narainpur prototype for detecting witchcraft around Jagdalpur, a fee of Rs. 5 being paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Temple Court of Wards whenever surrounding Murias requisitioned its services.

As has been observed on page 51, there is a tradition among the Hill Marias (of Chhota Dongar, Mangnar and Barsur Mar *parganas*) that the great log-god Pat Raja of the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana* with the help of his wife's brother, Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan of the Bison-horn village of Ghotpal, near Barsur, divided up both Hill and Bison-horn Marias into clans, in the old days when there was regular intermarriage between the Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The legend does not appear to be known to the latter, who have only vague traditions of having at some remote date descended to their present lands from the Abujhmar hills, where occasionally they say that their clan-god still resides.

It is certain that most of the Hill Maria clan-gods have relationship claimed for them with Pat Raja of Mohnar. The Usendi clan of Orcha has his younger brother Wikir Hunga at Japgunda, the Deda clan of Kurmer have another younger brother, Nule Harma, the Dhurwa clan of Gomagal have his sister Oghal Mutta'i, the Hill Maria Marvi clan of Toqtoli in Mangnar *pargana* have his sister's son Mara-Magh, while the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar

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pargana not only acquired a yet younger brother of Pat Raja, Verma Mo'itto Pen, as their clan-god, but also a family of Pat Raja's clan, the Jaterom,[1] as hereditary clan-priests because, the Jaterom being *ahomame*[2] (wife-clan) to the Gumelor, the new god was related to them as *mama* or maternal uncle and had to have a priest or *waddai* of his own clan or one *dadabhai*[3] (brother-clan) to it. They say in fact that all clan-gods are mutually related, if they are sometimes very hazy as to the actual relationship; and they add that the gods, being Koitor, must have a full set of brother-clans and wife-clans like any other Koitor. Memories are, however, so poor that it is often difficult to ascertain the name of a man's dead father and quite impossible to ascertain the name of his grandfather and the clan and village of his grandmother, if, indeed, even of his mother; and it would be altogether out of the question to disentangle the descents and relationships of the clans by deduction from the traditional kinship of the clan-gods to Pat Raja and each other.

That old clans split up into new clans is clear, especially among the Hill Marias, from the fact that several of the larger clans have attached to them smaller clans which have no separate clan-god of their own, but attend the celebrations of the god of the large and presumably parent clan; certain other clans, though they have new clan-gods of their own, acknowledge their origin from another clan by taking the permission of the god of that clan before holding their own clan festivals. The way in which these clans split up is a matter belonging rather to the chapter in Part V, where the clan and phratry organization is dealt with as a matter of social organization, than to this chapter on religion. Here the point is that new clans are breaking off, and that their separation from the parent clan is signalized by the birth of a son or daughter (a son in the cases that I have seen) to the god of the parent clan. Thus Tumirgunda, in the plains between Handawada, still a true Hill Maria village, and the river Indrawati, near Barsur, belongs to the Tamo clan, and is the seat of their god Hurra Gunda Mo'itto[3] Pen. The *modul-waddai* of this clan-god was in 1930 still the *modul-waddai* of neighbouring villages of the Atami clan; and of the Tamo and Atami villages in his 'see' some were, like Tumirgunda itself, still mainly Hill Maria in culture, dancing in Hill Maria style, and some had changed to Bison-horn culture and dancing, and were recognized as Bison-horn

[1] Jāterom is the plural of Jāte; the clan is distinct from the Jāti, plural Jātiār, and the Jāti clan of Jātwara *pargana*.

[2] Clans are *ahomame* to clans with which they may intermarry, but *dadabhai* to all others.

[3] '*Mo'itto*' ('old man') or '*mutta'e*' ('old woman') is always added to the clan-god's name.

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villages by the headman of the Bison-horn Pharaspal *pargana*. The god had long ago produced a son worshipped as clan-god in the Atami village of Chudala Karka, now a Bison-horn village. But the son's dependence on the parent was shown by the practice of the Tumirgunda clan-priest every third year making a new network of peacock's quills for encasing the front cross-piece of the Chudala Karka son. The *modul-waddai* shaves his beard only when he has to start to make a new quill network, and lets it grow after that till it has again to be replaced three years later. Chudala Karka pays Tumirgunda for this network a pig, a *khandi* of 164 lb. of husked rice and a pot of *mahua* spirit. In the *pen-rawar* hut of the god at Tumirgunda was yet another son, already named Hunga Gunda Mo'itto Pen, who was being made for another Atami village in the 'see', and was to be taken to it as soon as he was a year old; he then consisted only of one bamboo pole tipped with a silver cone and adorned with bunches of peacock feathers. Here perhaps the need for separation was arising because the Atami villages were adopting or had adopted Bison-horn ways, while the village for which the new god was being 'born' was some way from Chudala Karka, and effectively separated from it by the Indrawati river. So at Kurmer at the end of 1929 Nule Harma, god of the Deda clan, was producing a 'son' for some distant villages of the clan; and we have already seen how the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar *pargana* acquired from the Jaterom of Mohnar not only a younger brother of their god, but a Jate family to be his clan-priest.

The *Gazetteer* has been quoted as suggesting that the system of separate areas and separate gods for each clan was breaking down. Among the Hill Marias the remark is justified to the following extent only. Many of the old villages of the Bhairamgarh Mar and Kutru Mar *parganas* of the Kutru zamindari have disappeared, including indeed the two which Glasfurd gave as the seats of the chief Hill Maria clan-gods of his time. Many clans have disappeared or are reduced to one or two households. There are various causes; maladministration leading to exodus to the tahsils of the plains or the Chanda district, the great 1918 influenza epidemic, and the ravages of yaws. The total disappearance of clans is evidenced by the presence in villages now settled by other clans of *kotokal* rows of menhirs erected for the Departed of forgotten clans, quite distinct from those erected by the present clan, which can give no information at all about its predecessors. Clans greatly diminished in numbers soon find that they cannot economically manage to keep even one village going on their traditional clan-area, much less keep effective control and user of all the alternative *penda* slopes of the area. The dregs, therefore, of three or four clans may settle

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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together in a village in the area of the largest dreg, and abandon claim to the other clan-areas; for example, Aipur in Kutru Mar had in 1931, one Hoyami, one Telam, one Micha and two Bardi clan houses, while Malahanar had four Hoyami, two Pungati and one Diwa. Both were originally Hoyami clan villages; the clan has also still the villages of Komu and Kalhaza in Bhairamgarh Mar, but has since the census deserted Malahanar, as the headman and all but one Hoyami householder died suddenly, and the remaining Hoyami shifted to Kalhaza. In adjacent parts of the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* there are big clans like the Usendi and the Jugho already needing fresh lands, and the obvious fields for expansion are the empty lands of dwindling or extinct clans in Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar. Often big clans have just thrown off parties of squatters who have founded fresh villages in such places; the large Gume clan of Barsur Mar has, for example, long occupied Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada in Bhairamgarh Mar. Where there is still a remnant of a clan strong enough to raise some opposition to squatters from other clans coming in to their areas, but not to retain effective cultivating occupation, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the chief village (the clan being always too small to have retained an area big enough to become a *pargana*, and seldom having even a clan-god in its days of adversity) has sold some of the clan land for a few rupees to another clan; thus comparatively recently the Ark clan, now of Korowaya village only, sold the lands of their deserted village of Itulnar for Rs. 30 to the overflowing Jugho clan of the adjacent Chhota Dongar Mar village of Adeq and other large villages. When the sale took place, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Arkalur showed the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Jughalor the traditional village sites, and the cairns marking former shrines of the Village Mother, and extracted a sworn promise of reverence for her. The Arkalur themselves could not have long been in occupation, as they said that the *kotokal* menhirs at Itulnar had not been erected by them but by some other forgotten clan which had died out before their occupation of the village.

Not only have hardly any of these dying clans clan-gods and clan-priests, but also the colonizers, having left their hereditary clan-area, consider themselves outside their clan-god's jurisdiction, and 'under no need' therefore to attend his Koqsar or to get his permission to hold festivals before the Village Mothers of their new villages. So the Gumelor of Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada are seen no more at the Gume Koqsar of Verma Mo'itto Pen at To'inar in Barsur Mar, and the Jughalor settlers of Itulnar do not join their fellow Jughalor of Adeq and other villages of Chhota Dongar Mar at the Koqsar of the Usendi and allied clans' god Wikir Hunga at

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618 Orcha. Ultimately the new colonies may spread, and they may feel the need of clan-gods and petition the clan-priests of the areas 776 from which they migrated to give them a son of the old clan-god; but meanwhile the majority of them get on quite well without him and his clan-gatherings, and find the Village Mother and village ceremonies quite enough for their needs. If in time they ask for a clan-god of their own, they are likely to get some additional name to distinguish them from the main section of their clan, and ultimately all mention of the original clan name will be omitted.

It was remarked on page 194 that for each clan of the Gonds of the British India districts bordering on Nagpur there is or was a *Pen-kara* or Holy Circle under a *saja* tree somewhere in the province. If he has not become detribalized, every Gond should visit this once a year with offerings, or at least should pay sacrificial fines there on the birth of a child, on being released from handcuffs, on readmission to the community after some social lapse, and so on; and there ultimately his soul should be brought after death, to be united to the clan Departed. The villages are there no longer the *bhum* of particular clans, and many clans and god-groups may be represented in one village. Members of the clans are scattered far and wide over the province, and in one Nagpur Gond village you may find representatives of clans with the *Pen-kara* of their gods at places so far apart as Berar, Chhindwara, Lanji or Chanda. Many have settled far from their *Pen-kara* for so many generations that the fatigue of the long journey has been avoided more and more by each new generation till in the end it has been given up, and many of the present time cannot even say where it is.

Special features of the Clan-god among the Bison-horn Marias

776 To this kind of attitude some of the Bison-horn Marias are 618 beginning to come. There are many clan-areas[1] in Bijapur and 615 Dantewara tahsils and in Kutru zamindari on both sides of the river Indrawati which, as indicated in the ethnic map on page 40, are peopled by clans once purely Hill Maria in language and culture, but now modified in both by contact either with Bison-horn Maria

[1] Examples are Chikatraj Pen of Kutru, the god of the Gota clan of Kutru, Borje, Bhirabhatti, Pillur, Sappimarka, Kakler, Gattapalli, Mendri, Udru villages; Kuwo-Gundo Pen, god of the Majje and Wadde clans of Bodametta, Kodepalli, Majje-Mendri, Kungler, Madhepar, Dudepalli, and Rengawaya in Kutru zamindari and of Kounde (where the god is kept and the clan-priest lives) and other villages in Chanda District; Wachami Mo'itto Pen, of Markanar in Kutru zamindari, god of the Wachami clan of Markanar, Irkapal, Karkelli, Kumbarmeta and Bodeli in Kutru Zamindari and some adjacent Wachami clan villages in Ahiri zamindari; Wange Muri Pen, of Dhanora in Bijapur tahsil, god of the Kuriyami clan of several villages around Dhanora and Thoinar and Pharsegarh sub-zamindaris of Kutru.

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or with Dorla neighbours. The clearest sign these retain of their Hill Maria origin is the retention of separate clan-areas, clan-gods and *modul-waddai* clan-priests for each large clan (*pari* or *hatta*) or pair or trio of closely related clans, as distinct from the Bison-horn Maria institution of one *pen* or clan-god for each of the five groups of clans or phratries (*tarr* or *kutmara*) and every clan (*hatta*) included in it, without any fixed phratry-area. On the other hand, each village in the true Bison-horn tracts is said to be the *bhum* of the clan (*hatta*) of the *perma* who originally founded it, and, as it is the *bhum* of his clan, he alone can officiate for the village at the ceremonies and sacrifices before the Village Mother, the Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo, Bhu-deo and Bhu-Devi, and the other forms under which the Earth is worshipped at the different agricultural ceremonies.

The Bison-horn country is extensive and, compared to the Hill Maria country, well populated. The villages forming the *bhum* of even individual *hatta* clans may be miles apart, while a village that is the *bhum* of a clan in phratry A may be surrounded by villages that are the *bhum* of clans in phratries B, C, D and E for miles before there is another village of a clan of phratry A. Further, though a village may be the *bhum* of the *perma's* clan, he may easily have only a few other householders of his clan in the village, but several of other kindred and affine clans. At Aranpur, most members of the big and small Marvi, the Hemla and the Oyami clans, all of which are included in the Marvi phratry, did not know the name of the clan-god of their phratry, but suggested vaguely that his *pen-rawar* might be in the Abujhmar hills or in Padar-raj, their name for the plateau around Jagdalpur. Some knew that the god's name was Handa Kosa Pen, and a few said that his *pen-rawar* was at Killepal, nearly sixty miles away, where the great western road from Jagdalpur to Bhopalpatnam approaches the passes descending to the Dantewara valley. At Killepal, however, I had not been shown Handa Kosa Pen; the village is the *bhum* of the Kuhrami clan, which gives its name to the Kuhrami phratry, and the clan members stated that they had no *pen-rawar* of their clan at Killepal, but that Hermraj Pen, their god, was, they had heard, in some village near Orcha in the Abujhmar hills. It was often agreed that a Maria should visit his Pen or clan-god every year in Aghan or Pand month (November-December) and offer a pig or a cock to the god at this annual *pen-jatra* or festival of the *pen*. At Aranpur a few of the older men said that they had long ago visited the Marvi clan-god Handa Kosa Pen at Killepal in their youth, but in recent years no one seemed to have been near. It was agreed that certain social offences could only be expiated by a visit and penal offering to the clan-god.

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776 614 615 The elders of the villages can actually often give the names of each of the gods whom they say that each of the five Bison-horn phratries worships: the Markami phratry worships Harma Pen; the Kuhrami phratry give varying names for their god, Hermraj Pen, Perambhoi (the name applied by the Dorlas to their corresponding Perambhoi phratry) or Banian Muttai; the Kawasi phratry worships Babo Herma Pen; the Marvi phratry Handa Kosa Pen; and the Sodi phratry Tul-Muttai Pen, whose *pen-rawar* is at Kamkanar in the Gangalur *pargana* in Bijapur tahsil, where Sodi Harma the *modul-waddai*, was regarded as the headman of all the surrounding Bison-horn villages. But other names are also given, such as Hirangraj, Hingaraj and Belraj for the Kartami clan, Hirmaraj for the Kawasi, Sodi, Markami and Marvi clans, and Hing-hunga and Mundaraj for the Beko and Kalmu clans. I have used the word 'clan' advisedly, because in this list some gods are shared by clans belonging to different phratries; thus Hirmaraj is shared by the Markami and Kartami clans of the Markami phratry and by the Sodi and Marvi clans of the Sodi and Marvi phratries, while of the worshippers of Hing-hunga and Mundaraj the Beko clan belongs to the Kuhrami phratry and the Kalmu clan to the Markami. Use Modia Pen of Ghotpal is restricted to the Lekami clan of that and surrounding villages, which is now considered part of the Kuhrami phratry. Other local log-gods will be found in the heart of the Bison-horn country at such places as Dugeli; some may be the true *pen-rawars* of the phratries, but I have been unable to verify this.

614 615 173 The whole position is, it must be admitted, somewhat confused, but it would be wrong to expect to systematize it. The same confusion will be found again over the totems of the phratries and clans; there are two phratries with the tortoise as totem, and inside the same phratry will be found clans with totems of their own or the totem of other phratries, or no totem at all. The traditions of the Bison-horn Marias all point to their having descended southwards from the Abujhmar hills to colonize their present country, and the presence in their midst of ruined Hindu cities at Dantewara, Barsur, and Bhairamgarh, of traces of forgotten kingdoms at Tirathgarh and Kuakonda, and of isolated villages of Jhari Telangas descended from the subjects of early medieval Telugu kings, point to the truth of the traditions. We have seen how new clans are forming to-day on the southern fringes of the Abujhmar hills, and how the Bison-horn culture is gradually absorbing the southernmost Hill Maria clans, which have, however, not fitted themselves fully as yet into the five-phratry organization, but retain their own clan-gods. The five phratries are named after five principal clans,

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the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonizers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhuma-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *perma* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *perma*.

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *perma* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *hadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu*; *bhum-jaga*

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Marias

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means 'the earth-place'; *kadri* is the Bison-horn word for *kasyeq*, the knife carried in the loin-cloth, and the *perma* is sometimes called the *kadri-gaita*. *Wijj-erhu* means 'seed-*mahua*'; in most Bison-horn villages there is a sacred *mahua* tree, instead of the *saja* tree that is the rule in hill villages, in the middle of the sacred field, and the tree is the 'seed-*mahua*' because beneath it are held the ceremonies of the important '*Wijja* (seed) *Pandum*'. The *saja* tree remains equally sacred, as will be observed from the way in which its leaves are used in the ceremonies described in the next chapter. Under or near the *mahua* tree is often a wooden post or an upright cube of stone with a sloping top, known generally as Bhimul, which is made as occasion demands to serve as Bhimul Deo, Tallin Uchur, Dongar Deo, Mata, or any other god required; near this the *perma* will clean and plaster a flat piece of ground, known as *khari-mundi*, for sacrificing the victims. Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo and Bhu-deo combined with Bhu-devi and called generally by the Bison-horn Marias of Sukma zamindari Polamraj and Polam-muttai, are all really forms of the Village Mother, or at least of the Earth; there are several other such forms, and, though all are fundamentally the same, they tend gradually to be vaguely differentiated in the minds of the villagers, and soon, no doubt, will be individual godlings, each with his own functions. Bhimul is the rain-giver, who has been Hinduized amongst Central Provinces Gonds and the Murias of the north of Bastar as Bhimsen or Bhima, one of the five Pandava brothers; besides his annual *pandum* in the early spring, he is liable to be treated roughly if the rains are late or scanty. His wooden or stone post is then pelted with dung and filth by abusive females, who challenge him to show his powers by sending his rain to wash himself clean.

Demons

The Bison-horn Marias go much farther than the Hill Marias in deifying the forces of nature. There are the Ban Devi spirits of the forest, Jalkamani the spirit of rivers, and, for nearly every mountain pass, pile of boulders, or precipice, some spirit, all of whom may need propitiation, and some of whom are becoming godlings with a cult. The Hill Marias have a vague dread of evil spirits of the mountains, which they call *rau*; amongst the Murias and Bhattras there are other demons such as Uran Rau who blows away the grain with the chaff at winnowing, and Chitkar Rau who brings wild animals to trample down the crops; but the only *rau* to whom I have heard a name given by Hill Marias is Raja Rau, the demon of the Raughat pass in Antagarh tahsil, held to be a very Raja of the *rau* because he caused mountain-sickness to the first European surveyor seen in Bastar. All Marias also speak with fear of a water-witch in the

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form of a great serpent, known as *Tondetaras*, haunting river rapids and waterfalls, the mere sight of whom is fatal. 776 781

The traces of totemism amongst Hill and Bison-horn Marias will be described in the chapter on social organization. It may briefly be stated here that there appears to be no connexion between the totems and the clan-god, and that at no ceremony, either clan or village, or domestic, is the totem ever mentioned or worshipped. It gets a vague respect, perhaps an occasional *salaam*, from members of the totem, and they do not touch, kill or eat it if they can avoid doing so.

Totems

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769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As 776 the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this 614 association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far 775 as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural,

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who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *hanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* increase in size if the *hanal* commemorated by it is happy. There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex. Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *uraskal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *uraskal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] *Report*, p. 52.

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Lists of Hill Maria Clans and Bison-horn Maria Clans and Phratries, and Pedigree of the Hill Maria Family holding the Hereditary Headmanship of Chhota Dongar Pargana and Orcha Village

[(d) Signifies that the village was deserted in 1934]

Hill Maria Clans

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Usendi	Chhota Dongar	Orcha Japgunda Hoinar (d) Juwada Dugarli Bagom Thadur Machan Duseli Kejang (d) Uragonda (d)	Wikir Hunga (kept at Japgunda, but brought to Orcha for festivals)	Goat
	Kutru Mar	Michwada	None	
	Kirangal (*not Hill Maria but Gotul Muria*)	One or two villages	?	
	Chanda District	?	?	
Wadder	Chhota Dongar	Dhanora Jori Hikpulla Kodeli Perilmeta Rengabera (d)	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda	None
	Bhomra (Muria)	Kurselhur	Use Dokra of Kurselhur	
	Chanda District, and Kutru S. of Indrawati	Kaunde and others, and Madhepar and a few more in Kutru	Kuwo-Gundo of Kaunde	
Korami	Chhota Dongar	Hirangai Verma	Worship the Usendi god of Japgunda	None

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Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dodi	Do.	Jhara Rajpur Idnar	Do.	None
Deda	Chhota Dongar	Kurmer Dedalur	Nule Harma or Eram Mo'itto of Kurmer	None
Parsal	Do.	Chalcheghi	Do.	None
Katlami	Do.	Jhori Hikpulla (shared with Wadder)	Pandu Hunga of Jhori, elder brother of Wikir Hunga, the Usendi god	None
Jugho, *alias* Karme (plural, Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar Bhairamgarh Mar	Adeq Karanmeta (d) Akmeta (d) Maspur (d) Nelanar Makawada Gomagal Hasnar Rainar Gapa (d) Itulnar	Worships the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda Say would worship Wikir Hunga if still in Chhota Dongar *pargana*, but no need as now in Kutru zamindari	None; the name Karme said to mean 'sunset', the ancestor of clan having been born then
Dhurwa (almost a branch of Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar	Share Gomagal and Hasnar with Jughalor	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda but have also his sister Oghal Muttai as their own god	None; clan says it is elder brother of Jughalor

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Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dol ('younger brothers' of Jughalor)	Do.	Kohkapaghai	Worship Usendi god Wikir Hunga	Called Dol because members started making *dol* drums
Matami	Do.	Teknar	Do.	None
Dugher	Do.	Maramnar	Do.	None
Potawi	Do.	Almost extinct; one house in Orcha	Do.	None
Poyami	Do.	Kundali (one house)	Do.	None
Gecha	Do. Mangnar	Udala Tondawada Wetekal (d)	Do.	None. Name means 'sluggard' clan
Neghal	Chhota Dongar	Bhera Tondawada	Do.	Panther
Ahkal	Do.	Gudadi	Do.	None
Ete[1]	Do.	Kondakoti	Nule Harma of Kurmer	? Crab
Boka	Do.	Dondrewada Bokalur		None
Kohla	Chhota Dongar	Mandali Kushnar Batwada Kostari Gumter Hoinger Devanar Kerinar Irpenar	Mu'ima Kohla Pen of Batwada	?
Padāl	Padalibhum	All the *pargana*	Gumtuli Muttai, of Adnar	None
Kumoti	Chhota Dongar	Almost extinct; 2 houses in Hamar, 1 in Rainar	None	None
Jāti	Jātwara	Most of the *pargana*	?	?

[1] Ete is probably the same as Yete, a Kutra Mar clan.

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Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Boter	Kutru Mar	Boter	None	None
Wachami	Kutru Mar and Ahiri (mostly Indrawati valley)	Kumharmeta Markanar Irkapal Karkelli Bodeli and some Ahiri villages	Wachami Moitto Pen of Kumharmeta	?
Mohanda	Kutru Mar	Lakka Hingmeta Bhuri Puslakka	A god at Lakka	?
Oyâmi	Bhairamgarh Mar	Komu Kalhaza Malahanar (d)	None	None
Mohke	Do. Chhota Dongar	2 houses in Kalhaza Albera (d)	None	None
Yete	Bhairamgarh Mar	Hoinar	None	Crab
Pungati	Do.	2 houses in Ader (Kutru)	None	?
Bardâl	Bardal Tapalibbum	Whole *pargana* Ranimarka	Hurra Mu'iya of Kornâr	None
Farsâl	Farsâl Bhairamgarh	Whole *pargana* (13 inhabited villages) Bheriabbum	Kodo Mo'itto of Dhurwada None	None
Gôtâl	Hukkagotal Tulagotal Farsigotal	Whole *pargana* (9 inhabited villages) Whole *pargana* (9 inhabited villages) Whole *pargana* (5 inhabited villages)	Pâhanleya Muttari of Toinar in Tulagotal Do. Top Mudya of Mohandi, said to be younger brother of Pahanley's husband	None None None

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Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Tapa	Tapálibhúm (Chhote Mar)	Nearly all the villages of the *pargana*	Riksa Pen of Dodrimarka in Tapalibhum	None
Nughoti, *alias* Nuroti	Nurbhum játwara Tapalibhum	All *pargana* but Turko Kohkameta Markawada Hachekote	?	None
Hichami	Nurbhum	Turko	The Nughoti god	?
Parlio	Kutru Mar	Dodmarka Karangul Nugur Ader (Kutru) Padmeta	Koruk Pen of Karangal and Nugur	Goat
Játi	Kutru Mar Chhote Dongar	Játalur Akdum (d)	None	?
Kohka	Bhairamgarh Mar	Kakowada, or Kakawoki	None	Kohka-marra the marking-nut tree
Ark	Do.	Korowaya; sold Itulnar to Jughalor	None	None
Játe (plural, Játerom)	Mangnar	Mornar	Pat Raja	The Játe grass used for making brooms to sweep the god's shrine
Tokalor	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *toka* or flap of loincloth left to hang behind like a tail
Hukur	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *huk* or basketry ladle used to stir rice cooked at the god's shrine

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Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Marvi	Mangnar	Tōkhtōli Kuwer Modangwada Moghori	Mārā-māgh, Pat Raja's sister's son or *bārenjal*. They get leave from Pat Raja to hold his nephew's festivals	?
Tamo	Dantewara Mar	Tumirgunda Padmeta	Hurra Gunda Moitto of Tumir-gunda	None
Atami[1]	Barsur	Chhota Karka Palawaya	Do.	?
Lekami[1]	Barsur	Batawada Ghotpal	Use Modia of Ghotpal	?

There were one or two Lekami houses in the Hill Maria villages of Handawada and Dunga.

Gume	Dantewara or Barsur Mar	Toinar Handawada Hikul Thakawada Paralnar Prinkapal Kodokal Hitawada	Verma Mo'itto Pen of Toinar. The *waddai* is Jātē by clan	None
	Bhairamgarh	Kunjewada Goti Dunga Pariakot	None	
Alami	Mangnar	Nendur Gatla	Attend festivals of Pat Raja, god of Jāt-erom at Mornar	Chameleon (alām)
Nonde	Mangnar	Rotad	Do.	Rope

[1] Now, in culture, Bison-horn clans; but the Lekami intermarries with the Gume clan, and the Atami still worships the Hill Maria *pen* of the Tamo clan.

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of the Abujhmar, I was told, Grigson once encountered an ancient woman completely naked. She had never seen a white face before and, believing the visitor to be a Rakshasa, fell at his feet begging to be allowed to go for a few moments to her village to bid farewell to her little grandson, after which she would return to be devoured. 114

There is no end to these stories, many of them tales of generosity and kindness that would embarrass Grigson to have repeated. The result has been that Bastar is a very pleasant place to tour in. I have had trouble enough in Provinces and States, where there has been no one like Grigson to precede me, to realize vividly the difference that he has made. He is not the only one; Bastar has long been fortunate in her officers; but he set the pace.

When it was decided to issue an Indian edition of this book and Grigson asked me to write a sort of Comment to go with it, I was puzzled to know what to put in. I have done a certain amount of writing[1] about Bastar and the Bison-horn Marias, among whom I spent a good deal of time, and I did not want to repeat here what I had already written. In the end, at the risk of being very scrappy, I decided to give all my unpublished notes on the Marias, rather on the principle of the Abbot's order at the sack of Beziers: 'Kill them all; God will know his own.'

I deal first, therefore, with a few larger subjects, where my material supplements Grigson's, such as magic and the tragedies to which its practice leads, Bison-horn Maria ideas and taboos with regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, the dormitory and funerary customs. It seemed worth while to describe in some detail a marriage ceremony and the Ghotpal Marhai which I had witnessed personally. After that I proceed to give brief notes on points in the book which appear to need amplification. Short of reprinting a large amount of already published material, I do not know what other plan was possible.

II

Do the Marias believe in a Supreme Being? Grigson was not able to assemble any very definite evidence on this point. 'Only around Orcha', he says, 'and a few neighbouring Chhota 776

[1] For convenience of reference I shall give a list of my publications on Bastar and the Murias or Marias. 'Ceremonial Cross-Dressing among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 163; 'Suicide among the Aboriginals of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 207; 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII, p. 121; 'The Sago Palm in Bastar State', *J.R.A.S. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 69; 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, p. 97; *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); 'Stilt-Walking among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLIV, p. 38; *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944); *The Muria and their Ghotul* (Bombay, 1947); 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXV. [113]

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776 Dongar Pargana Hill Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural, who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.' Koppers, who is perhaps a little too obviously anxious to discover belief in a Supreme Deity everywhere for the demands of strict science, protests at this vagueness. 'In the light of the many facts known to-day', he says, 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory. Apart from other difficulties it seems more than improbable that aboriginals would in such a case quickly and easily find a new word to express a meaning which (according to Grigson's assumption) would be foreign to their mental vocabulary. The word Ispural appears to be genuinely Dravidian.'[1] But Grigson could hardly be expected to improve on his evidence, and actually nothing is more characteristic of the aboriginal ecstatics than their invention of new words. I too have heard vague references to Ispural—far away from Chhota Dongar in the east of Kondagaon as well as in the Jhoria foothills. In a Muria song, Ispural is described as having daughters, the youngest of whom is Phulsundri Rani. In a Burkul Pata, a song used when a man has been killed by a tiger, Ispural appears as one of many gods who is accused of having caused the tragedy. Among the Bondos of Jeypore (who do not speak a Dravidian language), I found Ispur as the name of a sky god who is invoked at the time of winnowing the grain if there is no wind to blow away the chaff. This, and the fact that he has daughters, suggests that Ispural is a variant of Indra or Indal, a sky god who sends the rain and whose daughters often visit the earth. The actual word 'Ispural' may have been born in trance. A wizard hears the names Ishwar, Indal, Purub (Lord); they sink into his mind and are forgotten; then one day as he is raving in trance a new word comes into his head, and a new god is made.

But although Ispural is only doubtfully a name of the Supreme Being, the evidence appears to me overwhelming that all the aboriginals of central India and Orissa believe in some sort of Creator or Supreme Deity. Some of them, identifying him with the Sun, call him by a special tribal name and very generally they use the honorific terms Bhagavan or Mahapurub[2] and their dialectical variants. The most convincing proof that this belief is not a

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[1] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV and XXXVI, p. 307.

[2] Bhagavan is the classical Hindu term for the adorable object of *Bhakti* worship; Mahapurub or Mahaprabhu is a Sanskrit word meaning 'great master' and may be applied to any eminent person, human or divine; in Bengal it is especially used of Chaitanya

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modern Hindu or missionary accretion is to be found in a study of the myths of origin which in many tribes have all the marks of antiquity. In these a Supreme Being is firmly established. He is not omnipotent, he is not omniscient, his character is ambiguous, his morals are uncertain and his language coarse. But he is exalted far above all others and he is the prime mover in the creative process as well as the goal of the human spirit after death. 776

My collection of Maria myths is incomplete, but the Bison-horn Maria story of Creation leaves no room to doubt the tribe's belief in a Supreme Deity. 776 773 539

There was a great rain and the world was drowned. But Gajabhimul put a brother and sister—their names were Kawachi and Kuharami—in a gourd. This gourd drifted to and fro until it ran aground on a great rock. Mahapurub sent a crow to search for men. The crow found the gourd, pecked it open and released the boy and girl who began to cry. Mahapurub told the crow to stop the noise, but it wanted the children to die so that it could feed on their bodies and it did nothing. Mahapurub sent an eagle, but it too did nothing. Then he sent a tiger, but it too did nothing. At last he sent a monkey. The monkey sat on a rock and asked the children what was the matter. The rock was so hot that it burnt its buttocks and it jumped on to a tree. 'We have nowhere to go,' said the children, 'and there is no food.' The monkey returned to Mahapurub and told him.

Mahapurub now sent a boar. 'Near the rock is a tortoise,' he said. 'It has made itself a home of mud and clay. Take off the mud and spread it on the rock.' 'But how am I to live without food?' asked the boar. 'These children will sow seed,' said Mahapurub. 'There will be a harvest on the rock, and you will be the first to eat it.' That is why the wild boar always ravages the crops before men can reap them.

The boar found the tortoise and rolled itself in the mud. It came to the rock and shook itself violently. The mud flew in all directions and there was the world again.

This story was recorded at Rewali and was repeated with small variants in other villages. But at Killepal, the Marias said that the children were put in the gourd by the gods Andalkosa, Patraj, Pirusi and Tuldokarj. It was Mahapurub who wanted to destroy the children and he himself tried to cut the gourd open and so let them drown. But the gods got hold of the gourd in time and threw it into the water and it drifted away out of Mahapurub's reach. If this is a Supreme Being, it is a singularly imperfect one. And 776 773

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indeed it must be confessed that the Maria belief in Mahapurub is weaker than in other tribes. The Sun and Moon were created, not by him, but by human beings. Fire was not given—as in so many legends—to the world by God, but was discovered by man in a more or less natural way in a broken stone or a split bamboo. In only one of the folk-tales does Mahapurub play a part. In this he teaches the hero how to make a hearth and gives him a magic bel stick. He refuses to answer the prayer of a bird which begs him to restore its mate to life.

On the whole, we may conclude that while the Marias undoubtedly believe in some kind of Supreme Deity, he is not vividly imagined by them, and his cult is overlaid by the interest and excitement aroused by the earth-bound deities like Danteshwari and the clan-gods and by the attention that must be given to the Departed.

III

The general pattern of Maria magical beliefs has been traced by Grigson and his picture may be supplemented by my chapter on 'Witchcraft and Magic' in *Maria Murder and Suicide*. A few additional notes may be of interest.

The dread of witchcraft and black magic seems to me to be stronger among the Marias than in the other primitive populations of Middle India. Among the neighbouring Bondos, for example, it is comparatively weak and hardly troubles the deeply religious Saoras whose attention is concentrated on pacifying the Dead.

In Maria opinion, the practitioner of black magic is frequently a widow, often a riggish widow. Her chief delight is to interfere with other people's pleasures; she sends grubs into the spathe of the sago palm and thus checks the supply of the refreshing juice; she loves to rob a fresh young girl of her rightful joys by prolonging her menstrual periods; she frustrates men's happiness by making them impotent; she blights the marriage-bed with barrenness. These wanton and jealous widows are a great nuisance in Maria society. Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda told me how he was pestered by one of them but, since he had two wives already, did not want to be involved in a scandal and in any case was not attracted, he rejected her advances. In revenge she nearly killed him with black magic. Another old Oyami Maria insisted that it was only a widow who could perform this magic; as a young man such a woman had begged him to lie with her and when he refused had made him impotent. At Kuchepal I met a man who had once engaged himself in that most dangerous of erotic adventures, a love-affair with a widow. After a time he wearied of her and in

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224 796 787 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamma Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate. [782]

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

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times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long. 226 227

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Netânch horinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'. [524]

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes. 226 278

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden. 226 776 782

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first. 273

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2] 273 824

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election 273 883

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 92.

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841 515 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria [842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their [833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 522 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

841 787 As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 776 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendra-wandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

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the motiari Hidde who died for love. Unhappily, when the girl committed suicide, she was in her catamenial period. The result is that she is regarded in some places as an untouchable goddess. Some ten years ago, her symbol was taken to the great festival at Keskal, and her Siraha went into the shrine of Bangaram, consort of Danteshwari. The Siraha of Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal stopped them. There was a great quarrel, and Pendrawandin's Siraha took the case to the court at Kondagaon, whence it went in appeal to the Maharaja. He ruled that the goddess was banned from visiting the shrines of Kuar Pat (son of Kanda Dokara), Danteshwari, Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal, but that she might be taken elsewhere.

All over the State there are stories of the unhappy fate which has befallen those who have broken the menstrual taboos. In the Karikhodra ghotul I was told of a shocking incident in Jatabera (Kanker State) where two menstruous women went to a *dahi*-clearing, picked a cucumber and ate it. A tiger attacked them and killed them both.[1] At Tarabera, Lati quarrelled with his wife when she was in her period and struck her twice. Soon afterwards he hanged himself in his field. 'The Departed were angry with him for touching an unclean woman and drove him to kill himself.'

[1] This rigorist attitude towards the menstruating woman is by no means confined to the aboriginal in India. Thus, to give but one example, M. N. Srinivas describes the traditional outlook of the highest Hindus of Mysore. 'The menstruum is nothing but the sin of Brahmin-killing in liquid form.' The degree of defilement varies from day to day. For the first day's impurity a woman will be punished by being reborn as an untouchable, for the second day's as a Brahmin-killer, for the third day's as a washerwoman. The daughter of the sage Udanka was nightly transformed into a mass of worms because seven lives earlier she had touched some cooking-vessels while in her period.—M. N. Srinivas, *Marriage and Family in Mysore* (Bombay, 1942), p. 129.

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MURIA RELIGION

II. The Origin of the Gods

A Hindu lives by ceremonies; a Muria lives by his gods.—Muria proverb

Muria religion is a blend of the tremendous and the homely; at one moment the peasant trembles before a display of overwhelming dynamic energy, at the next he is abusing his god for flirting with a goddess of his own clan. The Muria take a great interest in the domestic affairs of their gods; they are much better acquainted with divine than human genealogies; they are proud of the vast confusion and multiplicity of the Bastar deities.

For there are, they say, 'more gods in Bastar than anywhere in India'. Many legends describe their immigration, their birth, their movements from place to place. 'Long ago'—the story comes from Benur—

before the Bastar Raj had come into being, Raja Dokára lived in Warangal.[1] His younger brother was Gotal Dokara. When Danteshwari Mai came to Bastar, Raja Dokara followed her as the Lamhada of Budha Dokara's sister, Pat Rani. Gotal Dokara accompanied them, but he went to live in the Marian Raj in order to avoid his brother. Raja Dokara settled in Bara Dongar and was married to Pat Rani. From them were born Hunga Dokara, Pahedunga, Waikirunge, Guttehunge and Lingo Dokara.

In Bara Dongar, Budha Deo and Samrat Dokara his brother had many daughters. Four of these were carried off by the four elder sons of Raja Dokara. Budha Dokara and Samrat Dokara had seven score sons and seven score daughters. They said to Lingo Dokara, 'These are for you'. But Lingo was very pure. He said, 'No, I do not desire to marry'. So the four brothers said, 'Well, you stay at home and we'll give these girls villages instead'. So the four brothers put the rest of the girls into a fish-basket and sat on the back of a tortoise. By their magic the tortoise turned into an elephant. Seated on the elephant the brothers rode slowly round the Bastar Raj. As they went they gave one girl to four villages, another to seven, and each girl became the Mata Devi of her village.

The tortoise moved very slowly and the brothers put *bhilwa* oil under its tail. So passed many days. The four brothers' wives took red cucumbers and put them in swings and rocked them to and fro, saying 'These are our children'. Now their servant was Kadrengal. They sent him to find their husbands. There was only one girl left in the fish-basket. Her name was Tallur Muttai. The brothers threw her with the basket into Paramwar village and went home, for they could hear from afar the singing of their wives. But Kadrengal met Tallur Muttai and said to her, 'Let us live here together'. They were not married, but lived there as mistress and servant. She used to send him to make people ill, and thus they got food-sacrifice and made a scanty living.

There follows an account of the brothers' return home, their suspicion of their wives—'Who is the father of these children?'—the testing of Lingo and his vindication. In this version of the tale it is Tallur Muttai who goes with Kadrengal to bring Lingo out of the iron bin in which he is being roasted

[1] In Motewand, the villagers told us that 'the gods used to live in Warangal. Thence they climbed by a red thread into the Upper World. Looking down they saw Bastar and charmed with the sight descended by the silkworm's thread into the Bastar hills and lived there'.

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to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasize the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.

Aho vereloyo verela ver loyo ver loyo eke verela!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrengal!
Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutela.
Oho the many baby stars!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in the ghotul Madan Matal Rai!
In the village Jamedarin Mata!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
Give him a good Johar.

[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.

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In the banyan is the cat,
In the pipal Mirchuk Rai,
In the deep gully Bhutuk Rai,
In the Hutang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give them a good Johar.

Near Ranghat is Talachetang Rai,
In Jabkastang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give him a good Johar.

To the Ran of the pass, Johar.
To Tipagardha Ran Rai, Johar.
To Hitagardha Ran Rai, Johar.
To Kodagardha Ran Rai, Johar.

Below the pass is Maoli Rai,
Below the hill is Maoli Rai,
In Dantegarh is Maoli Rai,
In Antagarh is Maoli Rai.
Give, give a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Kana Mudial Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother Bechor's son]
Bechor Kodor Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Budha Mudial Penur Rai [*Akomāna* to Lingo]
Guta Mudial Penur Rai
Dewan Mudial Penur Rai
Kada Hural Penur Rai
Kokor Mudial Penur Rai
Oche Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kola Koso Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Halel Dokari Muttai Penur Rai
Halai Dokari Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's sister]
Hirgiri Penur Rai [son of Halai Dokari]
Son Kumar Penur Rai [son of Kanda Dokara]
Nettergundi Penur Rai [son of Lingo]
Lingo Mudial Penur Rai.

Oho the eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai!
The hunting horn hanging from his shoulder,
The Madan Parai drum at his loins,
The Paijna Rai (anklets) on his feet,
The Dhumir Rai (fiddle) across his chest,
The Jhikar Rai (Jew's harp) with the wind passing through his nose,
The Sulur Rai (flute) played with his mouth.
Give him a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Dandki Dokari Penur Rai,
Sunga Deo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]

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Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Tograjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bisbrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Wainganga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Seoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 170.

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her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many an untouchable goddess.

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kuntpadar.

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it; I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty; sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of clans, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

There is only one tree, but it gives many kinds of leaves—
A god (deo) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief.

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

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time to time, the Siraha selects one or two for special worship and attention. The cult of the gods, therefore, moves to and fro, now illuminating a forgotten deity, now strengthening the influence of the more powerful. There is nothing fixed, definite, logical or formulated about Muria religion, for here the power of the prophet and magician is greater than that of the priest. Muria religion is thus dynamic and essentially modernist. It can always adapt itself to new conditions. There is nothing traditional or orthodox in its temper.

The Supreme Being

The Muria have a belief, which is probably very old, in a Supreme Being, whom they call variously Mahapurub, Ispural and Bhagavan. Mahapurub, which may be literally translated the 'Great East', perhaps has reference to the Sun. Bhagavan is, of course, the common Hindu name for the adorable god of Bhakti worship. Mahapurub and Bhagavan are not distinguished in Muria thought: the difference between them is linguistic, Mahapurub being used in the exclusively Halbi-speaking areas. Ispural presents more of a problem. Grigson found the word in use in a few Hill Maria villages bordering the Muria country. 'Ispural would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was. . . It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.'[1] But to Koppers 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory'. The word Ispural, he thinks, is 'genuinely Dravidian' and suggests a very old belief in a Supreme Being.[2] Like Grigson, I was unable to discover anything about Ispural, though he appears in the song given on p. 169 as one of the deities accused of having caused a man to be killed by a tiger. He is, however, acquitted of the charge and the death is ascribed to the jealousy of the Departed. But the word is known right across northern Bastar and I agree with Koppers that it probably represents an ancient element in Muria theology.

Mahapurub, to call him by what is his common name, is the creator of Nadumbhum or the Middle World. He lives in Porrobhum, or Upper World, attended by his seven daughters, the divine motiari, and from this post of vantage exercises a rather sketchy control over human affairs. He created the world, but only with the help of Lingo and Bhimul. He made mankind, but so carelessly that many people turned into witches and warlocks. It took him a long while to discover how to ensure that men and women would die and thus provide him with a sufficient supply of *jiwa* or living souls. He appears to exercise no control at all on the daily life of mortals; he does men no good, but neither does he do them any harm. As a result there is not a single shrine for him throughout the Muria country. He receives no sacrifices and in ordinary thought is largely ignored. As the originator of death, however, it is supposed that when a man dies it may be at his command.

Both Bhagavan and Mahapurub appear in Muria folk-tales though I am not sure how far the picture given there is to be taken in a theological sense. Each deity has seven daughters, though we hear nothing of wives.[3] Every evening the seven daughters go in their flying chariot to visit Mahapurub and to dance before him.[4] In one tale the seven daughters get annoyed with the hero and build a dam to stop the rain falling on his fields. He climbs up a

[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 244f.
[2] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV/XXXVI (1940-1), p. 307.
[3] The Bhil, however, 'are all of one opinion that Bhagwan has no wife and no children'. Koppers, op. cit., p. 292.
[4] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), p. 8.

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776 silken thread to ask Bhagavan himself for water. On the way he discovers the dam and destroys it: the girls beat him. Bhagavan intervenes and tells his daughters not to give trouble to human beings.[1]

Mahapurub is shown living in the Upper World and curious about conditions of life elsewhere. He sends a crow to tour the three Worlds and discover where the greatest happiness is to be found. The crow reports that it is in the Middle World. The youngest daughter insists on going to see, so Mahapurub calls a spider and makes it spin a thread to connect the Upper and the Middle Worlds.[2]

In the tales the Supreme Being appears far more accessible than we should imagine from a study of the theology. A hero goes to Mahapurub's palace to ask a boon and a magic goat and the seven daughters are given with a father's blessings.[3] Another hero goes on pilgrimage to Mahapurub and has all his problems solved.[4]

Bara Pen

The Great God of the Gond, it has always been said, is Bara Deo, Bhera Pen, Budha Deo. He is supposed to live in the sacred saja tree and to be more honoured by the Gond than any other. In Bastar, however, this deity is not specially worshipped by the Muria.[5] Among them the name Bara Pen or Budha Dokara is the name of a very ancient clan-god, and nowadays, whenever the Muria are at a loss to give a name to a clan-god, they call him Bara or Budha Pen. There are indeed a bewildering number of Anga, flags and Gutal with these names. At Chingnar there is an Anga who is worshipped by the Naitami, Tekami, Maravi, Poyami and Parchapi. He is called Budha Dokara. At Kharkagaon there is another Anga with the same name connected with the Duga, Kalo, Halami, Dhurwa, Buyi and other clans. At Kursai Budha Pen is the god of the Komra and Kaudo clans. At Kokori he is the god of the Uika and Wadde clans; at Metawand of the Partabi and Ori; at Lanjora of the Poyami. I have no doubt that there are other shrines in his honour in many other villages.

The extent of the cult of Bara Pen in Bastar might be supposed to indicate his importance, but he is not one of those deities who is constantly remembered at festivals or funerals. I think that his cult is extensive largely because his name is convenient. Bara Pen, a great god, Budha Deo, a venerable god; it is an obvious and useful title.[6]

The Earth Mother

The earth or *Mum* is the ultimate source of life and power who manifests herself in all the other deities. Men are the children of earth, fed and loved by her. She is personified in Tallur Muttai who appears frequently in legends and songs. She is one of the gods living in the ghotul to protect the children;

[1] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 31-2.
[2] Ibid., pp. 139f. [3] Ibid., p. 10. [4] Ibid., pp. 283ff.
[5] 'As far as I have ascertained the Marias and Murias do not worship Burra Deo.' —W. H. Shoobert in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 75. This is going too far.
[6] 'The Gonds are, however, found to have one common object of worship called according to the linguistic peculiarities of the locality, Bura Deo, Bada Deo, or Badial Pen. Pen and Deo mean the same, but the signification of Bura or Bada I am not sure of. Major Macpherson tells us that Bura Pen, the Kandh god, means "the god of light". Mr Hislop no doubt rightly conjectures that Badial Pen, whom he also calls Badhal Pen, and the Kandh god is the same; but he translates Badhal in one place (page 14) as "the old god", though in a note to the same page he quotes as if affirming the *Calcutta Review* in translating the word "Sun-god". If Bura Deo means "old god" it should, I suppose, be written "Burha", but in the way the word is pronounced, I do not detect the aspirate.' —Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

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she has a special concern for the success of the crops; according to some legends, she invented the sago-palm. The Muria offer sacrifices to her on all the chief occasions of their lives.

Nowadays, however, the Muria have got into a great muddle about Mother Earth and her associated deities. She is now often identified with the goddess Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of Bastar. Tallur Muttai, under Hindu influence, turns into Mati Deo, then she changes her sex back again to Danteshwari Matal. She is also often mixed up with the Gaon Devi, or any other Matal or Maoli who may be worshipped in the village. It is impossible to expect any kind of consistency, for the Muria are not trained theologians, but it is fairly safe to say that when the Muria worships either Gaon Matal, Jimmedarin Matal, Thakurain, Danteshwari Matal, Maoli or indeed any other Matal, he is really thinking of Tallur Muttai or the Earth. In the prevailing Shaivite atmosphere of Middle India, all nature deities are inevitably personified as female.

The Earth Mother, in whatever form she takes, generally has a special shrine in her honour. She may be represented by a wide variety of symbols. Her special priest is the Kaser-Gaita, who makes offerings to her on every occasion affecting the life or honour of the village.

The association of this goddess with the ghotul is not perhaps very close, but in some places she is believed to live there with Kadrengal, her official consort, and with Lingo. There is indeed a story that Tallur Muttai was in love with Lingo and, after murdering one of his wives, tried vainly to win him to herself. Before going out on any dancing expedition and at their return to the village, the girls and boys make suitable offerings at the shrine of the Earth Mother. They remember her also when they go to hunt or fish, when they make a new drum, when they worship the drums before a marriage and when they accompany a corpse to its grave.

The Earth Mother in the form of Danteshwari Mai or Matal is rapidly growing in importance and distinction throughout Bastar. In almost every village now there is some shrine or symbol in her honour. The arrival of her litter at a festival is the signal for a special demonstration. She excites the same vague but patriotic sentiment that the Church of England arouses in many Englishmen. She is a national institution, and though few Muria of the North can have visited her temple at Dantewara, a good many must have seen her coming in her panoply and attended by her priest on his elephant for the Dassera festival at Jagdalpur.

To enable the reader to understand the feeling of the Bastar Hindus towards this goddess I will quote from a communication made to me by the late Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh, Assistant Administrator of the State.

> Danteshwari is the family goddess of the Ruler. She is the Adi Shakti, the origin of all creation. She has no beginning or end and is not limited by space. She is the creative faculty of Brahma. When the whole creation is annihilated, she remains in Brahma, as a plant remains in a seed and other creations reappear through her. That power is symbolized as feminine since the generative function is a woman's attribute. She is all powerful and has a dazzling beauty. Her eight hands and the lion on which she rides are symbols of her power. She takes shape to rid the world of sinners and make it happy for the pious. She appeared when Mahishasur had spread terror in the world and killed him. She showers power, strength and happiness on her devotees. Sacrifices of goats and buffaloes are made in her name. The flesh of sacrificed goats is taken by men of the upper and

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lower castes and that of buffaloes only by Shudras. This flesh is of special sanctity as through it men who worship her get power. She is the special Goddess of the warring class—the Kshatriyas. Being the family goddess of the Ruler, she is recognized as the ruling goddess by all classes of Hindus and aboriginals of the State. 776

The Divine Right of Kings

The Maharaja is regarded as divine by all the Muria and Maria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and by some of the northern Muria. Each ruler appends the word Deo to the end of his name, the other male members of his house calling themselves Singh, though to distinguish them from other Kshatriya the prefix Lal is added, as in Lal Kalindar Singh. 776 648

The *gadi* or throne is held sacred and no one but the actual ruler may sit upon it. Should anyone break the rule, he would die. [778]

The ruler has special powers of intercession. 'His sacrifices, fasts, and oblations during the Dassera and Chaitrai festivals benefit not only himself but the members of the royal family and the people of the State. All the important deities of the State are brought to Jagdalpur during Dassera and worshipped on behalf of the ruler, his own worship being confined to the family goddess Danteshwari, Maoli and a few other gods. This worship keeps away disease from the people and cattle and results in good crops and universal happiness, as the deities remain pleased.'[1]

So strongly do the aboriginals believe this, that they greatly resent the Maharaja leaving the State even for a short time. His absence means a withdrawal of divine protection from cattle, crops and people.

Kadrengal

Kadrengal is the consort of Tallur Muttai, as Bangaram is the consort of Danteshwari. A story which I quote elsewhere[2] links him with the forest and the chase, and he is generally worshipped by the Muria before they set out on a ceremonial hunt. In some villages, however, Pati Deo takes his place. 776

His name occurs from time to time, generally in association with Tallur Muttai, in the songs and legends. In the oldest mythology he plays the part which more modern people ascribe to Mahadeo.

With Tallur Muttai and Lingo, he lives in the ghotul and protects the boys and girls. Along with other deities he is worshipped and remembered at festivals and on most of the major occasions of Muria life.

Dulha Deo

Jahn chulha taha Dulha.—Where there is a hearth, there is Dulha Deo.

Dulha Deo is the marriage god and is supposed to preside not only over the wedding but over the marriage bed, its happiness and its fertility.

Dulha Deo is not an original Muria god. He is an immigrant from the Central Provinces, where he receives very much more attention than in Bastar. In Bastar he has a certain nuisance value as causing trouble during marriages, a rather expensive addition to the pantheon who must be placated for fear that he will make himself objectionable. His ill temper can easily be explained

[1] Private communication from Rai Sahib Hiralal Singh.
[2] See page 40.

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by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning [1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsen and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Kondagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the usual offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 290 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 93; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 76 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhimas in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimadev who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

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The Gods of the Home

Among the Muria, specially those towards the east and round Kondagaon, there is a definite belief that certain gods are attached to men and women and go about with them sharing their life and helping when help is needed. At Kanera the Muria said that Dokara Deo lives with men and aids them in distress, while Kondi or Lagar Deo lives with women. At Dongrigura the Pujari said that the gods themselves do not accompany men everywhere but 'their shadows come to them on the wind' always ready to help in danger. At Karanji the people said that whatever god receives special honour rewards his worshippers by living with them but that Budha Deo, Kondi Deo and Lagar Deo, who came with the Raja of Bastar from Warangal to protect him, are the special gods who go here and there to guard human beings.

The fact that this belief is mainly confined to the more sophisticated (though still truly Muria) villages near Kondagaon suggests that it is a Hindu importation along the main road from the Central Provinces.

Kondi Deo goes with a girl [1] to her husband's house on the day she is married. After the birth of the first child, any misfortune that comes is attributed to this god and the family has to promise to worship him on condition that he troubles them no more. They wait for a year and then the woman's married sisters come to visit her and subscribe sufficient money to buy a pig.

On a Saturday the house is cleaned and the next morning a *chok* pattern is made in the compound with rice-flour, in the middle of which some rice is placed. A small earthen pot is put there and a knife. The head of the family offers incense and makes the pig eat the rice saying, 'O Kondi Deo, protect and preserve my family and children. It is for their sake that this offering is made to you, and we will repeat it every second year'. When the pig has eaten the rice, the husband of either the eldest or the youngest sister kills it. They cook the pig and invite the village elders to the feast. A pit is dug inside the house into which, when the feast is over, the leaf-plates, the pig's bones and even the water in which the cooking-pots are washed, must be thrown. They then hang the earthen pot and the knife near the Pot of the Departed.

The worship of Lagar Deo is not unlike that of Narayan Deo to whom the Larn pig is dedicated in the Central Provinces.[2] Lagar Deo is also a special god of women and is indeed often identified with Kondi Deo. He first lives with the mother of a household, but after the marriage of the eldest daughter he goes with her to her new home. When her child is born he first troubles the mother and then goes to each of her married sisters and troubles their female children. When they decide to appease him they ask all the female members of the family, sisters, sister's daughters, grand-daughters, all of them, and

her. The Koyi dance is an imitation of Bhimador's pursuit of his enemies); R. B. Bainbridge, 'The Sacrias of the Rajmahal Hills', *Mem. ASB.* Vol. II, pp. 46ff.

Other legends about Bhimsen may be found in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 99 and 135 (for Bhimsen's romance with a Devi); A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Reports*, Vol. XXII, p. 53 (the pillar of Aaoka near Bettiya locally regarded as Bhimsen's walking-stick); ibid., Vol. XVI, p. 16 (the lion pillar at Bakhra known as the pole of the bedstead of Bhimsen); an interesting and well-told story in R. A. Sterndale, *Seonee* (Calcutta, 1887), p. 97.

[1] Among the Uraon, Achrael and her companion Joda are the special deities of women. Once in a generation, every family must perform a ceremony for the well-being of its female children. As in Bastar, all female relatives and their husbands attend. For a full description, see S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 65ff.

[2] See *The Baiga*, pp. 405ff. and articles by Shamrao Hivale and Durga Bhagwat in *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 91–119.

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776 dedicate a pig by castrating it and removing a bit of the ear and tail. They wash its legs and throw rice at it saying, 'If you are a true god, give us prosperity, keep us safe and after so many years we will give you gifts'. Then the pig is set free and allowed to go where it will. The rice which was thrown at it is carefully divided and given to each of the husbands of the woman's younger sisters. They are to sow this every year, and at the end of three years to bring whatever has been produced. The men sow this seed in a special patch of ground, harvest it and store it separately, repeating the process every year. When they are ready they appoint a certain member of the family as the Kotwar for this special duty and he goes round to the houses of all those relations who three years before had shared in the ceremony. Once again all the female members of the family must come. Every household invited must bring a chicken.

On the appointed day each of the husbands comes with the rice that he has grown. They dig a pit and bring the dedicated pig. After making it eat rice as usual, they beat it over the head with a rice-husker and so kill it. The men invited to the feast may eat the pork, but the only women who may do so are those who were present at the original ceremony. Sometimes an interval of five years is allowed between the dedication of the pig and its sacrifice.

In some places the earthen pot with rice, pulse and a small knife is always kept near the House of the Departed to satisfy Kondi Pen.

The Divine Motiari

776 Throughout India the villagers dread and take endless trouble to placate the
171 Matal or Village Mothers.[1] These dangerous and malignant beings are the cause of disease, domestic tragedy and accident. It would be an interesting subject for psycho-analytic research to discover why the beautiful name 'Mother' should be given to these bloodthirsty deities.

But beside the Mothers there are the Maidens. These too are known in other parts of India.[2] In northern Bastar at least, as we might expect in a country populated by charming and graceful motiari, the Maidens or Kanyang are generally regarded as benevolent though, like the motiari, they expect to receive proper attention. It is not, I think, fanciful to call these the 'Divine Motiari' and indeed the seven chief Kanyang Sisters have the names Belosa, Dulosa, Alosa, Sulki, Lahari, Jalko and Malko, all of which are the titles of motiari. It is said that in the ghotul these titles are specially treasured and fortunate since they are the names of the Kanyang in whose honour the girls dance the Diwali dances.

776 There are Naiads, Kanyang, Divine Motiari—call them what you will—of the forest and of the water. One Kanyang lives in the sago-palm; another flashes across the sky in the shape of lightning; another presides over the salt-lick. In all they number seven score.

Let us examine some of them and their character more carefully. Perhaps the most important of the Kanyang is the Yer Kanyang, the rather lonely maiden who lives in streams and rivers. When she hears the music of the dance floating across at night from the nearest ghotul, she grows very sad and goes to find some motiari living wretched and ashamed because of the menstrual contagion that is on her. Then the two dance together in the world of dreams all night. This maiden is honoured by the Muria when they go to fish. Gifts are promised before they begin and if the catch is good they always remember her. When Gadru of Chaniyagaon was nearly drowned as a child, the Siraha

[1] See Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 111ff.
[2] See Dalton, op. cit., p. 188; Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 11a.

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diagnosed the reason in the failure of the boy's father to sacrifice a pig to the Yer Kanyang as he had promised to do after a good catch of fish.

A bride going from Amasara to Nayanar to be married gave the Water Maidens in a river she crossed two rings: 'As we give rings to our motiari she gave, for the Maidens of the Water are also motiari.' What is called the Neyi Maur or the first wedding crown, worn when haldi is put on the body of bride and bridegroom, is thrown into the river after the marriage, for the Kanyang of the water. After the cowhide for a drum has been soaked in water, offerings are made to her for fear she has been defiled. This Kanyang, who is called Yer Kanyang, Julan Kanyang and sometimes Bisran Kanyang, like all such beings is sometimes touchy and may attack men in the form of a crocodile. When this happens, the villagers must give her large gifts, a pig, eggs, seven rings of aonra, red powder for her forehead and bangles for her wrists. In Matawal they said that when they went to fish they always remembered the Bisran Kanyang and when they got a good catch gave her such feminine finery as they thought she would like. Bisran Kanyang is said to give special help to witches.

Another Kanyang of the water, called Ghat Kanyang, lives in the place where people bathe and draw water. When they take an Anga to bathe it at its annual festival they make offerings to this Kanyang saying, 'Be with us to help us. Here we drink water, here our children bathe. Let there be no disease, let no witch overlook the water; protect us and we will worship you every year'.

Bahi Kanyang lives in very small streams and is offered bangles made of weeds and other gifts to ensure good rain and plenty of water in the rice-fields. Chapar Kanyang, the Maiden of the salt-lick, lives in the place where cattle go to lick the salty earth, and there every year the Bhum-Gaita goes with the villagers to make the usual offerings in order to free the cattle from disease.

Kanyang of the fields, such as Berha Kanyang, preside over the crops. When the rice is ripening the Muria offer a pig for the village and a chicken for each house so that the grain may be good, undamaged by wild animals and not destroyed by witches. In Gudla people said that there were two Kanyang in the fields; one called Wujri is benevolent and ensures a good crop; the other, Bagri Kanyang, is responsible when the crop fails. In Matawal, the Maiden of the field was called Ras Kanyang and at Binjhli, Dhand Kanyang. Here they said that at harvest time the Gaita went to every field with chickens, vermilion and the new rice and offered it to Dhand Kanyang and Dhand Rau. Only when this had been done could they cut the crop.

In the forest lives Sukhli Kanyang in her little hut. Should a cow wander near, Sukhli Kanyang catches it and sucks the milk.

The Kanyang of the sago-palm, which was originally a feather-tuft in a motiari's hair, is described elsewhere.[1] This Mur Kanyang, as she is sometimes called, gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul'. Then she 'marries' and the juice ceases to flow. This Kanyang is subject to a menstrual period during which no one should drink the juice. Regular offerings are made to her when a tree is tapped for the first time.

Local Gods

In addition to the gods whose cult is more or less universal throughout the Muria country, there are many local gods who have generally come into being as a result of a dream or some magician's diagnosis of the cause of a calamity.

[1] See p. 55.

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Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods' *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

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614 776 Today when the process of god-making in Bastar has burst all bounds, when the clans have been scattered, when new clans have come into existence and old clans divided, there is no longer the neat and tidy arrangement of former days. But there is still a deep attachment to the idea of the clan-territory and the clan-god. Every clan still has its spiritual headquarters, still has the clan-god who is regularly worshipped at the great festivals, still maintains a clan-priest (Pen-Dhurwa or Pen-Waddai) to perform that worship, and still in many cases takes its dead to mingle with the clan-ancestors. What has happened in modern times is that each clan may have several places whither it will go for worship or for the disposal of its dead, and this has confused the picture. But the clan-gods are still of great authority.

778 776 614 The Anga is in form and character unique among the aboriginal gods of India. In form it is an arrangement of three parallel poles of saja,[1] bel or ira wood, over which are tied by siari rope cross-pieces of bamboo or saja. The central pole is the actual god, the two side-poles being simply intended to enable his two or four bearers to raise him and carry him about. This central pole has a curious head called *koko* which resembles that of a snake or bird. At the junctions of the logs and cross-bars there are tufts of peacock feathers. Silver ornaments, symbols of the sun and moon and sometimes plain rupees, are nailed to the ends of the poles. *Bands of silver may be hammered round* them. Bells are hung round the 'neck'. Sometimes the Anga is two-headed: husband and wife live together. The clan-god of the Maravi at Phunder, who is called Karati Dokara, has two heads each with a hooded cobra nailed to it. So too the Anga at Bhanpuri, Son Kuar, is two-headed. Sometimes the Anga's wife is made in the form of a pole and placed upon him.

The Anga is kept in a special shrine apart from the other gods and is either suspended by ropes from the roof or placed on a bamboo support a couple of feet above the ground. When it is taken abroad or goes to live for a time in someone's house, a special stand must be made for it. The Anga usually has a *jiwa* or soul. At Phunder it is a piece of iron carefully preserved under the sacrificial stone in front of the shrine. In Semurgaon the soul of Lingo is a bit of iron wrapped in a grass bundle and hung above its body. Sometimes the soul goes abroad of its own accord and has to be replaced with appropriate offerings. At Chingnar, the soul of Son Kuar goes to hunt at night and in the morning feathers are found scattered about his shrine.

When in use, the Anga is kept sometimes very casually. In Dongrigura, I saw one hanging from the roof in a corner of the granary belonging to the Gaita. At Magbeda, it was lying crookedly in a broken-down hut in the Gaita's garden. The two-headed Anga, Son Kuar-Maoli, at Bhanpuri, is kept in the Gaita's *bari*-enclosure in a little shed. At Karanji the Naitami Anga, Pila Kuar, is kept in the Gaita's house.

The Anga often has one or more attendants in the form of wooden horses slung from the roof beside it. These horses are taken out at the clan festivals and the mediums dance wildly with them. There are two horses attending the Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon. The shrines may be adorned with the skulls of animals killed in the latest ceremonial hunt, with decorated poles or sticks used by the god at festivals, and with symbols of the god's children.

For the Anga is very like a human being. It marries and has children. It has relations both inside and outside the clan. Some of the older gods have very large families. Lingo Pen's brothers, nephews and other relatives are enshrined and worshipped all over the north of the State. The process of

[1] The famous Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon is made of saja, for it was this tree he kicked as he escaped unhurt from his great ordeal.

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multiplication is accelerated by the Anga's polygamous habits. The son of an Anga may itself be an Anga, or it may take the form of a Gutal—a long pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the top, or a Lath—a decorated flag attached to a bamboo staff.

The manufacture of an Anga is an elaborate and dangerous business. It is a necessary one because new gods are born from time to time, and the old gods wear out. There is a general idea that an Anga 'dies' every three or four generations. When this happens it leaves its mortal frame and troubles its clansmen until they make it a new one. Sometimes it expresses its will by burning down its shrine—when this happens everything is consumed, but the god itself is unharmed. Sometimes it attacks the village cattle in the form of a tiger. Sometimes it plagues the Gaita with appalling dreams.

The actual making of the god is unusual and interesting; it reveals the logical and straightforward working of the Muria mind. Once it is admitted that the Anga is a sort of person with like passions to ourselves, the rest follows. I will give some typical accounts from villages in the north of the State.

In Kokori the clan-priest told me that when an Anga gets very old and tired, it is taken to a river and 'cooled' by being thrown into the water. The clan-priest prays to the Yer Kanyang, 'Now it is in your charge, you must care for it'. After a time the old Anga sends a dream to the priest and the villagers decide to make a new one. They have to go to another priest of a clan which stands in a marriageable relationship to the Anga's clan and he takes them to a suitable tree. He embraces it, and if his hands meet round the trunk it is a good omen, and an engagement is celebrated.

The following year in the month of Magh they again go to the same priest who offers rice to the tree and says, 'Now we are going to take you away'. He goes round it with a thread, winding it seven times, and then cuts it down. As he is cutting it, he gives the tree liquor from time to time 'in case it should get tired'. They take the wood home, and induce some old man to make the Anga. When it is ready they take it to the river and make offerings to the Yer Kanyang. Every Anga has an umbilical stump with a cord attached and the father's sister of the clan-priest must cut this cord and throw it into the water. Then they bathe the god to purify it after the cutting of the cord. At last it is taken to its temple and a young bull is sacrificed.

Another interesting account comes from Korenda, where the Anga of Budha Dokara and Dokari Deo, the clan-gods of the Partabi and Wadde clans in that area, are made every few generations. The preliminary rites are performed as elsewhere, but later, just before the visiting clan come to fetch the wood for their Anga, the Gaita of the Bhatgaon Mana (whence the wood must be taken) goes to the path by which they will come and buries seven eggs at intervals along it.

After the visitors have cut and dressed the wood, and are preparing to go home, they whistle loudly. The Gaita and villagers of Bhatgaon are waiting for the signal, and at once come out to catch them in a sort of game of hide-and-seek. The visitors dash for home, but if one of them is unlucky enough to break one of the buried eggs, it turns into a tiger which destroys their cattle.

When the Korenda people get home, they cut the tree into two, the upper half to be used for Budha Dokara and the lower for Dokari Deo. A special enclosure is made near the shrine of the now exhausted clan-god, and the wood is left there until someone comes forward who is willing to make the Anga. There is no limit to the interval; it may last any time from a few weeks to several years. When one or two very old men, who are not likely

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in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Anga begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods.

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-ravar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Karsita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage.

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond refers to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darima*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

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members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwāna* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Morg Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Angas at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

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opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened 776

Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of aonra leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe. 778 754

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the mediums proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardeshin, Koriya Pat, Garba Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divinations by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Sirahā-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kan* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'. 776 778 754 787

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp. 776 778 754

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Lord of Anga and the body. Vasubhuta 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shamefaced pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 317.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

2: Elwin E-5 (1939-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mân to pen nahi to pâthar.—*If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.*—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under asja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

1 See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
2 Dey, *op. cit.*, p. 328.
3 Ibid., p. 344.
4 J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

IN the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal godi of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Nettungundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other

[1] There is a shrine to Lingal Pen at Cherpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Maria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*. Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Eyre Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 47ff.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'Shiv-raj' (as it is often called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated 'country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the Spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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if they catch them relieving themselves. There is nothing very subtle or witty in any of this. In fact, since there are so few taboos on sex in the ghotul it is rather difficult to be funny about it.

It is worth noting that even the gods are not above a bit of horse-play. In Adnar I watched the young deity Chelik Sai, who was after all a chelik and conveniently represented by a long erect pole, amusing himself with a group of motiari. In the hands of his medium he pranced about, poking himself at the girls, chasing them about, pretending to catch them and ride upon them. Another medium carrying an iron chain amused everybody by his absurd gestures; he would dance round and round a line of girls, bend down and peer up into their faces in the most ridiculous manner. In Metawand, one of the horses of the gods was chased about the field, and roars of laughter greeted the divine sport.

A common type of funny story finds its humour in an absurd and indecorous situation. In Metawand I was told the tale of the woman who is going along the road in the rains. Some of the mud gets into her vagina and when she stops at a stream to wash it, a crab catches hold of her clitoris. She calls a man to help, but hard as he pulls at the crab he cannot make it let go. At last he tries to bite it off, but it gets hold of his nose with its spare claw, and there they all are—on a public highway, the respectable Muria with his nose stuck in the vagina of an unknown woman. After a while along comes a Lohar and gets the crab out with his tongs, but only on condition that the woman will give him 'tobacco' whenever he wants it. Some days later he comes to her house to claim his reward. She is busy cooking and asks him to lie down on a cot until she is ready. He lies on his face, but he is so excited that his erect penis goes through the strings of the cot and protrudes below. A cat thinking it a bit of meat, catches it. The situation is now reversed. The woman comes out and refuses to release the Lohar unless he declares her quit of her debt to him.

Another tale, from Aturgaon, which is known in Bengal and to the Uraon, but is given an entirely fresh and vivid turn by the Muria, again gets its effect from the sticking together, in public and deplorable juxtaposition, of incongruous things: a man and woman cannot get apart, a midwife finds her hands stuck to her head and nothing on below, a magician discovers a bullock's horns sticking to his bottom. Personally I think this tale is really funny, even in its bare and literal form.

There was a Muria Raja with one son. In his village was a barber who also had an only son. The two boys were always playing together, they would never do their work. The Raja used to tell his son to go and plough in the fields, but he always refused. At last the Raja got very angry and turned him out. The boy put on his ornaments and took a bag of money, mounted his horse and rode away. As he went he met the barber's son and told him that he was going to his future father-in-law's house. The barber's son said he would go with him.

Presently, the Raja's son said he wanted to relieve himself. There were no leafy trees at hand so the barber's son said, 'You had better take off your clothes and ornaments and go to the jungle in your loin cloth'. While the Raja's son was away, the barber's son put on his clothes and ornaments and rode off on the horse.

When the boy returned and found his things gone, he wept so loudly that Bara Deo heard his crying and came to him in the shape of an old

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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according to Mr Elwin's categories. Apart from the five intoxication murders, two were prompted by belief that crops had been bewitched, one was a fatigue crime and one was caused by a dispute as to property, one by resentment over being dunned for a debt of one anna and one by a quarrel over failure to repair the skins of a drum broken by a friend who had borrowed it, while three were the result of conjugal infidelity. There were three cases in which the villagers agreed to conceal the crime to avoid the trouble of police and court investigation. The means employed included assault with an axe, a sword, a fencing pole, a stick, a wooden stool and fists, kicking, throttling, shooting with bow and arrow, twisting of neck and stabbing with a knife. In one case the accused committed suicide to avoid the disgrace attendant on the revival of an old scandal caused by his son's association with a blacksmith girl whose murder he and the villagers had hushed up for three years.

Of witchcraft and magic as factors in crime Mr Elwin has written fully in Chapter V, and has illustrated at page 61 a typical clan-god, Anga Pen or Pat Deo (log-god), sometimes used to detect witches in the manner described at page 17, while at pages 185-6 he deals with the Maria view that a witch or a sorcerer should be killed. That view is undoubtedly widely held outside tribal circles, and the power of tribal log-gods to detect black magic is equally strongly believed in by Hindu and Muslim subjects of the State. The reaction of tribal beliefs and practices on the local Hindu rites and ceremonies is very marked, and an example of this is the way in which Raja Bhairon Deo, the great-grandfather of the present Maharaja of Bastar, installed in Jagdalpur a log-god which was either a copy of a famous log-god from Narayanpur in the north-west of the State, or, according to its present Halba Pujari, was brought by a former ruler from Dongar, the old capital, to Narayanpur, and shifted thence by Raja Bhairon Deo. This god is now the Pat Deo of Bastar *par excellence*, and four ceremonies are held in his honour during the Maharaja's Dassara celebrations. His witch-finding function strongly survives, and I well remember my amused astonishment when in 1927 during an inspection of the accounts of the Jagdalpur Temples managed by the State Court of Wards I found

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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that the villagers around Jagdalpur frequently requisitioned his services for this purpose, paying for them a fee of Rs 5 into the State Treasury. When I wondered whether by lending the log-god the Court of Wards had not been accessory to the killing or beating of witches, the Pujari thus explained the god's conformity to modern law: 'Pat Deo is worshipped to save men from *bhut* and *pret*, and detects *bhut*, *churel* and witches. If a village needs his detective services, the villagers pay into the Treasury a fee of Rs 5, and then the Manager lets me take the god out. I walk behind Pat Deo, who is carried on the shoulders of four men, none of whom must come from the village which needs his help. Starting from the east side, we take him round the village widdershins, and then enter the village, Pat Deo himself impelling the bearers and then knocking against the house where the evil is hidden or against the actual magician. He will not leave the house till the guilty one comes out. Then in these days the offender kneels before Pat Deo and cries for forgiveness, which is given before Pat Deo goes home; he is not even outcasted now. In my grandfather's time he would have been set on an ass with his face towards the tail and taken in procession round the village; his head would then have been shaved, his front teeth pulled out by a Ghasia, and his hair and teeth buried in an ant-hill, while he would have been excommunicated and driven out of his village. They pulled out his teeth to stop him using them to suck blood and because without them he could not pronounce his spells.' One may be pardoned for scepticism as to the affair even in modern days being closed with Pat Deo kindly forgiving the magician!

This fear of magic as the source of illness and all troubles is strong in many parts of India. Here in Hyderabad belief in the power of *bhanamatti* or black magic is widespread, even among some persons of the highest education and social standing. A detailed investigation was made in 1916 by Mr L. B. Goad, an experienced officer of the Indian Police, then in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department. His conclusion was that *bhanamatti* was so absolute a scourge in parts of Hyderabad and so utilized as a form of blackmail by its practitioners that special measures were

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 565 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 614 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. 771
Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should 776
be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan- 614
priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of 615
phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other 614
tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken [177] down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series 796
of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony